

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 KUALA 02343 01 OF 02 231348Z

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-05 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 PM-03

SY-02 DODE-00 ACDA-10 CIAE-00 EUR-08 SCCT-01 MC-01

/058 W

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R 230950Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3178

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 2343

LIMDIS

DEPT PASS OSD/ISA

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MY, US

SUBJECT: THE SECURITY SITUATION IN PERAK

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 1364 (DTG 110600Z MAR 76)

1. SUMMARY. BRIGADIER GENERAL DATUK JAAFAR ONN, COMMANDER OF MALAYSIAN SECOND INFANTRY BRIGADE IN KEY STATE OF PERAK, GAVE VISITING EA/IMS OFFICER SHEPARD AND EMBOFF DETAILED BRIEFING APRIL 15 ON CURRENT COMMUNIST TERRORIST (CT) STRATEGY AND HIS PLANS FOR DEALING WITH CT THREAT. HE CHARACTERIZED CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION IN PERAK AS "STATIC" AND WAS OUTSPOKENLY CRITICAL OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT FOR ABDICATING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IN SECURITY FIELD. HE ALSO SPOKE HARSHLY OF THAI GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO COOPERATE IN COUNTER-TERRORIST OPERATIONS, DESCRIBING BETONG SALIENT OF SOUTH THAILAND AS "VIRTUALLY CONTROLLED" BY COMMUNISTS AND CHARACTERIZING RTG ATTITUDE AS SHORTSIGHTED. HE SAID THAT THE BREAKAWAY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 KUALA 02343 01 OF 02 231348Z

"MARXIST-LENINIST" FACTION (CPM-M/L) WAS THE BEST ARMED

AND MOST MILITANT OF THE COMMUNIST FACTIONS HIS FORCES FACED, HAD HAD REMARKABLE RECRUITING SUCCESS, AND, HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED, WAS BEING SUPPORTED BY THE RUSSIANS. GENERAL JAAFAR SAID THAT HIS FORCE HAVE BEEN MONITORING A CT TACTICAL RADIO NET WITHIN MALAYSIA BUT LIMITED MANPOWER AND LACK OF DIRECTION-FINDING EQUIPMENT PREVENTED HIM FROM PINPOINTING THEIR LOCATION AND ELIMINATING THEM. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, RECENT CLASHES IN SOUTH THAILAND BETWEEN COMMUNIST FACTIONS VYING FOR TERRITORIAL CONTROL HELPED HIM AS NOW THE ENEMY "NEEDED TO PROTECT HIS REAR," MORALE OF HIS TROOPS WAS "HIGH" (THEY NOW WERE LESS DETERRED BY CT BOBBY TRAP TACTICS THAN IN THE PAST), AND HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT A NEW SCHEME OF CONTROLLING LOGGING OPERATIONS NOW BEING IMPLEMENTED IN THE STATE WOULD CUT CT'S OFF FROM AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF MATERIAL AND INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT AND OTHERWISE FACILITATE SECURITY OPERATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN'S YOUNGER BROTHER, BRIG. GEN. DATUK JAAFAR ONN, COMMANDING OFFICER, SECOND MALAYSIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE (PERAK) BEGAN LENGTHY BRIEFING OF EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER AND EA/IMS COUNTRY OFFICER BY RECALLING THAT "THE FIRST EMERGENCY" BEGAN IN RESOURCE-RICH PERAK IN 1948. AT PRESENT, THREE OF FOUR MAIN CT INFILTRATION ROUTES FROM SOUTH THAILAND GO THROUGH PERAK ALONG CENTRAL MOUNTAINOUS REGION OF PENINSULAR. GENERAL JAAFAR SAID THAT SUPPORTING CELLS ("MIN YUEN") NOT ONLY EXIST IN LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT PERAK FROM BORDER SOUTHWARD BUT ALSO EXTEND INTO STRATEGICALLY CENTRAL STATE OF PAHANG. HE SAID HIS MAIN OBJECTIVE IS TO ELIMINATE THESE CELLS, WHICH TAKES PRIORITY OVER ELIMINATING CT'S ("THE FULL-TIME ARMED PROFESSIONALS") WHOSE NUMBER IS FINITE AND WHO CANNOT POSE A MILITARY THREAT WITHOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THESE SUPPORTING CELLS. REMOVAL OF THIS KEY SUPPORT MECHANISM WOULD FORCE CT'S EITHER TO: (A) WITHDRAW ACROSS BORDER TO REGROUP, (B) BURROW DEEPER INTO JUNGLE WHERE THEIR ATTENTION WOULD BE DIVERTED TO QUESTIONS OF SURVIVAL RATHER THAN MILITARY ACTION, OR (C) AS LAST RECOURSE, SURRENDER. HOWEVER, SHOULD CT'S SUCCEED IN INFILTRATING INTO PAHANG IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS AND ESTABLISHING INDIGENOUS BASE THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE MAJOR

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PAGE 03 KUALA 02343 01 OF 02 231348Z

PROPAGANDA TRIUMPH AND WOULD BE AN EXTREMELY SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT, ESPECIALLY IF ETHNIC MALAYS INVOLVED.

3. GENERAL JAAFAR TRACED RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF SUPPORTING CELLS IN PERAK BACK TO 1969 AND SAID THAT THEY WERE NOW WELL ESTABLISHED. FROM INTERROGATION OF CAPTURED CT'S (WHOSE CAPTURE HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICIZED) HE HAS LEARNED THAT WHEREAS LAST YEAR WAS CONSIDERED BY CPM AS A "YEAR OF

COMBAT" THE CURRENT ONE IS A "YEAR OF ESCALATION" WHICH PRESUPPOSES INFILTRATION OF INCREASING NUMBERS OF CT'S INTO MALAYSIA FROM BASE AREAS IN SOUTHERN THAILAND. TERRORISTS SPECIFICALLY WILL AIM FOR PAHANG THROUGH PERAK AND KELANTAN STATES. THIS STRATEGY HAS BEEN SLOWED BY CURRENT FIGHTING BETWEEN CT'S AFFILIATED WITH COMPETING COMMUNIST FACTIONS, THE CPM PROPER AND THE DISSIDENT CPM-M/L, BOTH VYING FOR CONTROL OF THE WESTERN PORTION OF THE BETONG SALIENT. "THIS HELPS ME, AS NOW THE ENEMY MUST PROTECT HIS REAR." GEN. JAAFAR REMARKED, AND GIVES GOM FORCES ADDITIONAL TIME TO MEET TERRORIST CHAPTENGE.

4. JAAFAR'S STRATEGY TO MEET THIS THREAT INCLUDES A "ZONE OF MINEFIELDS BACKED UP BY INFANTRY," DEPLOYED ALONG EAST-WEST HIGHWAY (WHICH WHEN COMPLETED WILL STRETCH FROM KEDAH BORDER THROUGH PERAK INTO KELANTAN). HE ALSO DESCRIBED PLANS NOW UNDERWAY TO CLEAR PRESENT TIMBER ZONES IN "SENSITIVE AREAS" OF NORTHERN PERAK OF LOGGING OPERATIONS IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE A MAJOR TERRORIST TAX/ INFORMATION BASE. HE SAID THAT "ON SECURITY GROUNDS" HE HAD PREVAILED OVER PERAK CHIEF MINISTER'S ECONOMIC ARGUMENTS (SELF-SERVING, WE UNDERSTAND) THAT PROFITABLE LOGGING OPERATIONS SHOULD CONTINUE. RESULTANT COMPROMISE APPARENTLY INVOLVES RELOCATING LOGGING OPERATIONS ELSEWHERE IN STATE UNDER MORE TIGHTLY CONTROLLED CONDITIONS FROM SECURITY STANDPOINT (TO BE CALLED "FOREST MANAGEMENT UNITS"). HE ALSO HAS SUBMITTED PLAN FOR RESETTLEMENT OF PERAK'S "ORANG ASLI" (ABORIGINES), MANY OF WHOM LEAD NOMADIC EXISTENCE SCATTERED IN JUNGLE AREAS AND ARE USED AS GUIDES BY INFILTRATING CT'S AS WELL AS AGENTS FOR PROCURING FOOD. HE IS HOPEFUL PLAN, WHICH HE CLAIMED WOULD HASTEN INTEGRATION OF ORANG ASLI INTO MODERN ECONOMY AND COST

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 KUALA 02343 01 OF 02 231348Z

U.S. 60 MILLION DOLLARS OVER A TEN YEAR PERIOD, WILL BE ADOPTED. (HE ADDED THAT HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A TRIP TO THE NEIGHBORING STATE OF KELANTAN TO PERSUADE AUTHORITIES THERE OF THE MERITS OF THE ORANG ASLI RESETTLEMENT AND FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT SCHEMES). ACCORDING GEN. JAAFAR HIS OVERALL OBJECTIVE IS TO DENY TERRORISTS PRESENT ROUTES, FORCING THEM TO ATTEMPT INFILTRATION FURTHER WEST ALONG TERRITORY MORE ADVANTAGEOUS TO HIS FORCES.

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PAGE 01 KUALA 02343 02 OF 02 231152Z

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R 230950Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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CINCPAC

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 2343

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5. JAAFAR CRITICIZED STATE GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO CARRY ITS SHARE OF BURDEN IN COUNTER-TERRORIST EFFORTS. HE SAID SECURITY FORCE ROLE WAS TO SUPPLEMENT SECURITY EFFORTS OF CIVILIAN SIDE, WHERE MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY LAY, BUT WHERE, LAMENTABLY, INITIATIVE WAS NOT FORTHCOMING.

6. REGARDING CT STRENGTH AND CAPABILITIES, HE SAID THAT THE CPM-M/L IS THE BEST ARMED AND MOST MILITANT OF THE COMMUNIST FACTIONS HIS TROOPS FACED. THEY HAD HAD REMARKABLE SUCCESS IN RECRUITING NEW ADHERENTS; ALTHOUGH NUMBERING ONLY A HUNDRED OR SO AT THE OUTSET CPM-M/L STRENGTH HAD SWELLED TO ABOUT A THOUSAND AT PRESENT, COMPARED TO THE CPM PROPER'S STRENGTH OF ABOUT 2,000. (COMMENT: THIS IS HIGHEST FIGURE WE HAVE HEARD FOR CPM-M/L STRENGTH.) JAAFAR POSTULATED "PERSONAL" THESIS THAT SOVIETS SOMEHOW SUPPORTING CPM-M/L AS ATTESTED BY ITS ABILITY TO FINANCE THE PURCHASE OF GOOD WEAPONS (INCLUDING M-16 RIFLES AND SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 KUALA 02343 02 OF 02 231152Z

M-79 GRENADE LAUNCHERS, BOTH PRESUMABLY PURCHASED IN

THAILAND), AND INHERENT LOGIC OF SOVIETS BEING IMPELLED (AS HE SAW IT) TO MAINTAIN SOME TIES WITH SEA REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN CONTEXT OF SINO-SOVIET RIVALRY. CPM-M/L WAS THEREFORE A LOGICAL CANDIDATE FOR SUCH SUPPORT. (COMMENT: WE ARE SKEPTICAL OF SUCH A CONNECTION.)

7. GENERAL JAAFAR EVINced FRUSTRATION WITH "COMPLETE LACK OF COOPERATION FROM THAILAND", CLAIMING INABILITY OF HIS TROOPS TO ENGAGE IN HOT PURSUIT ACROSS THAI BORDER WHEN CONTACT MADE WITH CT'S OR HIS TROOPS FIRED ON (HE CITED EXAMPLE OF INCIDENT APRIL 3, UNREPORTED IN LOCAL PRESS, WHEN HIS TROOPS CAME UNDER "HEAVY ROCKET AND AUTOMATIC FIRE" RIGHT OVER THE HEADS OF THAI BORDER SECURITY PERSONNEL, ("WHO DID NOTHING\*"). HE SAID HE HAD DRAWN UP DETAILED PLANS FOR JOINT OPERATIONS WITH THAIS TEN YEARS AGO AND THAT HIS FRUSTRATION ENHANCED NOW BY FACT HE KNOWS "EXACTLY" WHERE BASE CAMPS ARE IN BETONG SALIENT AND CAN PINPOINT THEM ON A MAP. HE SAID THAT IN HIS PLANNING HE TOTALLY DISCOUNTS THAI COOPERATION AND WHENEVER ANY COOPERATION IS FORTHCOMING "IT IS A BONUS, PURE AND SIMPLE." ANOTHER PROBLEM HE CITED IS HIS INABILITY TO TRACK DOWN AND ELIMINATE A CT TACTICAL RADIO NET, WHICH HIS PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN MONITORING, DUE TO LACK OF DIRECTION FINDING EQUIPMENT. AVAILABILITY OF DIRECTION FINDING EQUIPMENT WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY UPGRADE HIS OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES AND HE HOPED THE USG MIGHT BE ABLE TO BE HELPFUL IN THIS REGARD. HE EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT M-16 RIFLES WERE BEGINNING TO ARRIVE IN QUANTITY AND NOTED THAT THIS HAD A FAVORABLE IMPACT ON MORALE. HE OPINED THAT IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, SUCCESS NOT RPT NOT EQUIPMENT-RELATED AND HE DID NOT WANT HIS MEN TO RELY ON HARDWARE. WHERE EQUIPMENT IS INADEQUATE, IT IS HIS JOB TO MOTIVATE HIS MEN TO COMPENSATE FOR SUCH DEFICIENCIES. HE WAS VERY UPBEAT ON MORALE OF HIS MEN ("COULDN'T ASK FOR MORE") AND NOTED THAT HIS PERSONNEL NOW ENGAGED IN AGGRESSIVE PATROLLING UNDETERRED BY BOOBY TRAP EXPLOSIONS.

8. COMMENT: BRIGADIER GENERAL JAAFAR, 43, PERSONALLY TALENTED AND BENEFITING FROM FACT HE IS PM'S BROTHER, IS CONSIDERED A "COMER" WITHIN THE MILITARY AND HAS ACCESS  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 KUALA 02343 02 OF 02 231152Z

(IN THEORY AT LEAST) TO HIGHEST LEVEL OF GOM. IN THE CONTINUING DEBATE BETWEEN THE SECURITY FORCES AND PERAK POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OVER SECURITY STRATEGY IN THIS CRUCIAL STATE HE IS AN ARDENT AND ARTICULATE ADVOCATE OF THE MILITARY VIEWPOINT. FROM OUR CONTACTS WITH HIM IN THE PAST YEAR (HE WAS INVOLVED IN RADM CROW'S PROGRAM LAST JULY) WE HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY HIS CANDOR AND INTELLIGENCE, BUT NONETHELESS CONSIDER SOME OF HIS

TACTICAL DOCTRINE TO BE WEAK (E.G., WHILE SPEAKING REPEATEDLY OF HIS DESIRE TO AVOID THE PITFALLS OF THE INDOCHINA COUNTERINSURGENCY EXPERIENCE, HIS COMMENTS ON LANDMINES AND STATIC DEFENSES ALONG THE EAST-WEST HIGHWAY SEEMED UNFORTUNATELY REMINISCENT OF VIETNAM).

9. WE THINK THAT GENERAL JAAFAR'S REQUEST REGARDING DIRECTION FINDING EQUIPMENT WAS MAINLY RHETORICAL SINCE THE GOM IS BELIEVED ALREADY TO HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY TO PINPOINT THE TACTICAL NET TRANSMITTERS IF IT CHOOSES TO DO SO AND LOCATING SMALLER, CITIZEN BAND HANDIE TALKIES WOULD REQUIRE AN EFFORT FAR GREATER THAN THEIR IMPORTANT WARRANTS. (WE ARE ALREADY IN PROCESS OF HELPING TO TRIANGULATE CPM-M/L TRANSMITTER -- SEE DAO KUALA LUMPUR MESSAGE 130641Z APR 76 - NOTAL -- AS A RESULT OF FORMAL REQUEST FROM DEFENSE MINISTRY.)

WE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE PREPARED TO CONSULT ON TACTICAL NET SHOULD IT TOO BE FORMALLY RAISED WITH US BY MOD. UNDERHILL

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## Message Attributes

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